

Application No. 10/617,914
Amendment Dated: December 3, 2004
Reply to Office Action of: September 27, 2004

In the Drawings

Please amend drawing Figure 2 to delete reference number "45," add reference number "54" and delete the dashed lines showing hanger 51 in tilted position 66.

Please add drawing Figure 2A to more clearly show the hanger 51 in its tilted position 66.

REMARKS

The Applicant would like to thank Examiner Weinhold for taking the time to discuss the Election/Restriction portion of the Office Action on September 14, 2004 prior to mailing the Office Action, and Examiner Ramirez for taking the time to discuss the September 27, 2004 Office Action on November 24, 2004.

Responsive to the Election/Restriction on Page 2 of the Office Action, Applicant elects Species 1 (Figures 1-9, Claims 1-8 and 11) with traverse. As discussed with Examiner Ramirez, the undersigned attorney understands that this is not a Restriction Requirement, and that should the elected figures and claims be allowed, a review of Figures 10-18 and Claims 9, 10 and 12-17 will be performed. All elected claims are believed readable on the elected species.

The above amendments to the specification and drawing figures are believed to resolve the Examiner's concerns on Pages 3 and 4 of the Office Action. Replacement sheets for pages 7, 10 and 13 and Figure 2 are enclosed herewith. An additional Figure 2A is enclosed as requested. No new subject matter is believed to be added via these amendments.

On Page 5 of the Office Action, the Examiner asserts that Claims 1-8 and 11 are indefinite under §112. With respect to Items 1 and 2, given Claim 1 is amended to delete the phrase "the front wall," Applicant asserts that Claim 1 is clearly directed to a stabilizing clip for the purpose set forth in the preamble. The body of Claim 1 does not continue to define the hanger or slatwall. In addition, as discussed with Examiner Ramirez, Claim 2 is amended to include the phrase "adapted to be", which is understood to broaden the scope of the claim. With respect to Item 3, Claim 1 requires a body (72) having resilient lower (93) and upper (83) portions that define narrow (74) and offset (75) portions. The narrow portion (74) is a part of the body, and there is a single offset portion (75).

On Page 6, the Examiner asserts that Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 8 and 11 are anticipated under § 102(a) by U.S. Patent No. 6,418,671 to DeRuiter because it discloses slats 37

with slots 155 that receive a clip 152 with a brace 156 that forms a slot to receive the hanger and prevent the hanger from rotating. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

DeRuiter is directed to a wall panel system 10 for subdividing an office area. (Col. 3, line 48). The panel system 10 includes panels 12 with removable panel covers or tiles 37. (Col. 4, line 52). The panels 12 include cable raceways 26 and 27, and have support rails 42 that support electrical and telecommunications wires 51 and 154. A cable management arrangement 151 permits electrical wires and cables to run vertically. Clips 152 releasably snap into and slide along horizontally extending T-shaped grooves 155. (Col. 10). The clip 152 has a face plate 156 and a pair of legs 157 and 158. A cover 153 is secured to the clip 152 to cover the vertical wires 154. DeRuiter does not pertain to slatwall, hangers or stabilizer clips.

Claim 1, as amended, is patentable over DeRuiter and the other references of record. Claim 1 is directed to a stabilizer clip 70 for stabilizing the securement of a hanger 50 with upper and lower portions 56, 59 to a slatwall assembly 10 having upper 16, lower 17 and middle 18 slats. The upper portion 56 of the hanger 50 is secured to an upper slot 46 while the stabilizer clip 70 is secured to a lower slot 47. The stabilizer clip 70 includes a body 72 having resilient lower 93 and upper 83 portions that define narrow 74 and offset 75 portions. The clip 70 also includes an upwardly extending brace 100 spaced from the middle slat 17 to form a slot to receive the lower portion 59 of the hanger 50 and hold the hanger against the middle slat 17 to maintain the hanger in a set position 67. Claim 1, as amended, is patentable over DeRuiter and the other references because they do not alone or in combination disclose; teach or suggest a stabilizer clip having any such structure, particularly for use with a hanger 50 and slatwall assembly 10. Claims 2, 5, 6, 8 and 11 depend from Claim 1, and are thus allowable for the above-noted reasons, as well as the subject matter recited therein.

For the above-noted reasons, Claim 1, as amended, and Claims 2, 5, 6, 8 and 11 are believed in condition for allowance. As discussed with Examiner Ramirez, Claims 9,

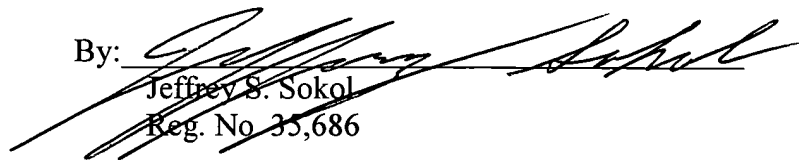
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10 and 12-17 are also believed in condition for allowance. The Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned if this will assist in advancing this application to allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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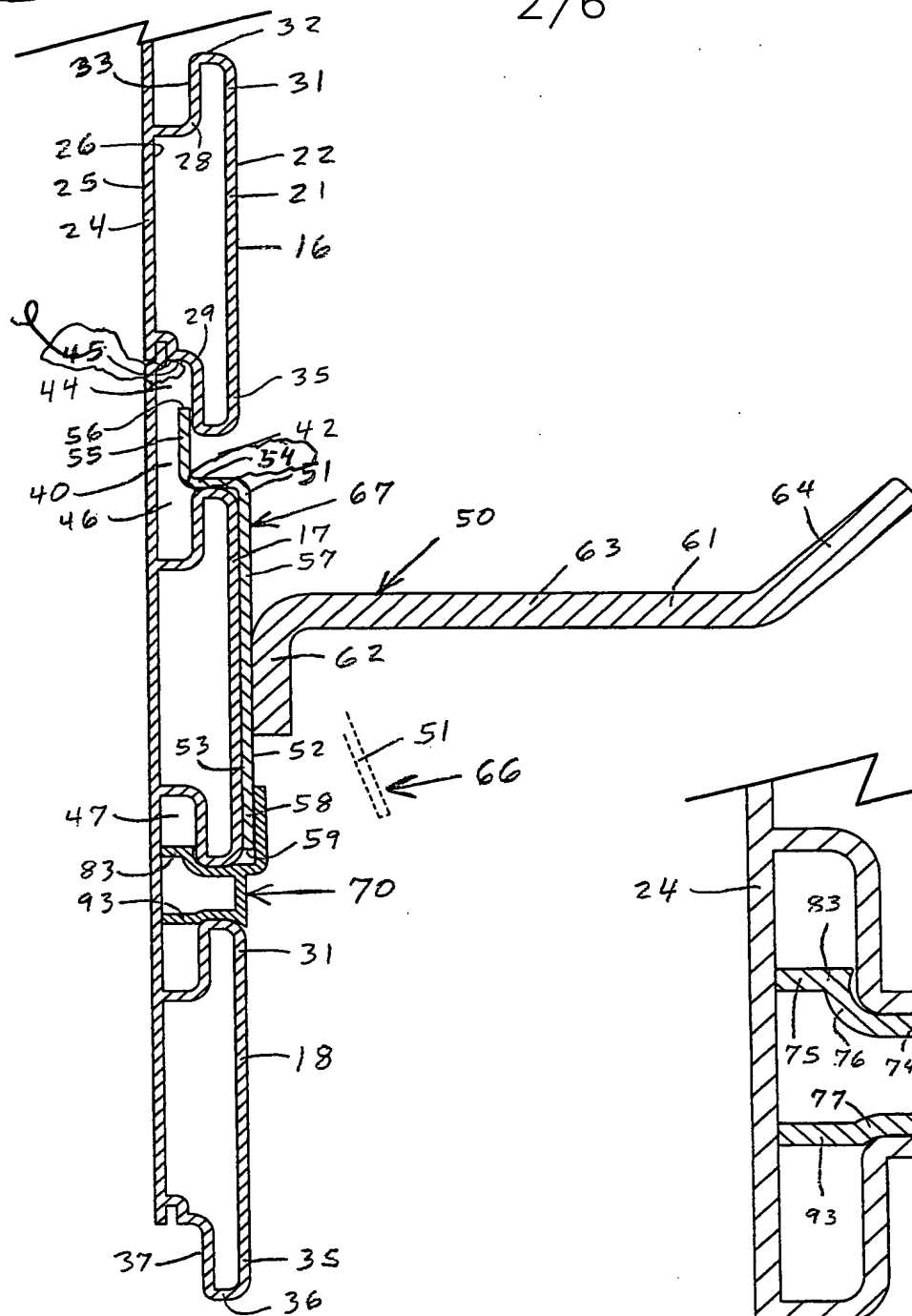


FIG. 2

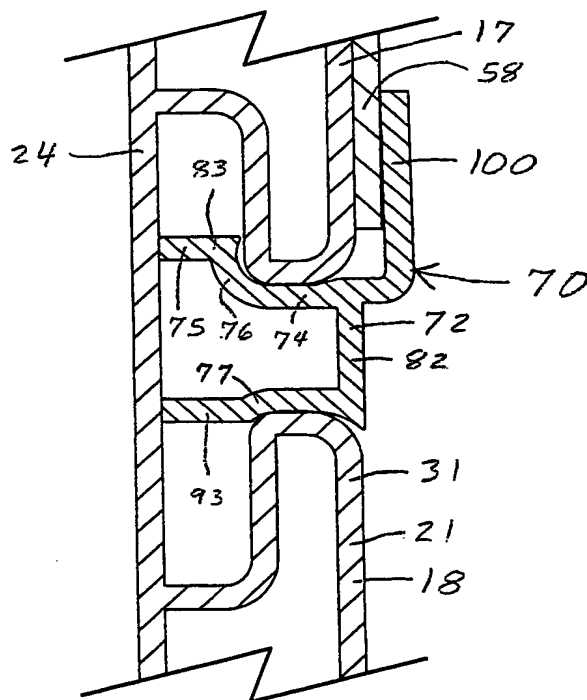


FIG. 3